App. F. IX-4

Previous References

Mily: 213-35-1806 1936-37 (53) File No. 55 34

Serial Nos. 1

Letter References.

M/y 127-3681-3

(D 145-39-107)

GENERAL AND REVENUE SECRETARIAT.

Serial Nos. 1

Part B for Oct. 1936

SUBJECT.

Circular letter No. 25 from His Highness the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on the question of the revision of the Indian States Forces Scheme.

WD 03607—GPB—22,500—2-8-35

CB 577

D 344

ENCL. One

Vasantha Manal,

Mysore, 5th October 1936

CB 55-86-1

DEWAN'S OFFICE
6 OCT. 1936
No. 762

SECOND MEMBER
10 OCT. 1936
NO 2639

Dear Mr. Kesavlengar,

I am desired to forward herewith, for favour of disposal, circular letter No. 24 of the 24th September last, from His Highness the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, on the question of the revision of the Indian States Forces Scheme.

For perusal

Yours sincerely,

Dewan)

6/10

6-10-36

7/10

Subd for perusal

7/10

18th member + 2nd member

CS.

10/10 6/10 7/10 12/10/36

Circular No.24.

Council House,
New Delhi.
24th September, 1936.

Your Highness,

I have recently received a communication from the Political Secretary to the Govt.of India to the effect that the Government of India could not proceed for the present with any general revision of the existing scheme in regard to the Indian States Forces, though in the matter of the "ear-marked" units some revision would be necessary as an urgent and ad interim measure. On further enquiries he has indicated the lines on which the scheme as far as it relates to the "ear-marked" units is to proceed. The Political Department is addressing individual States concerned through the usual official channel; but on my representation the Government of India have invited such criticism from the Standing Committee as it may be able to offer in regard to the proposals outlined. As the Indian States Forces Scheme has a direct bearing on Your Highness' State, I take it that all the necessary literature on the subject is already available in the archives of Your Highness' Government, and I need only send herewith a copy of a brief historical note on the subject to show the different stages through which the matter has passed in the Chamber of Princes and the Standing Committee, together with a copy of the report of the committee of Military Experts of Indian States to whom this question along with other allied matters was entrusted.

In order to enable the Standing Committee to lend the weight of their support in securing an equitable

P.T.O.

revision of the scheme, I shall feel grateful if Your Highness will kindly let me have your views on the various points involved.

Yours sincerely,

UDAIBHAN SINGH.

Maharaj-Rana of Dholpur,
Chancellor, Chamber of Princes.

Note on Revision of the Indian States Forces Scheme.

The question of the revision of the Indian States Forces Scheme of 1920 has been engaging the attention of the Government of India and the States for the last 10 years. At the informal meeting of the Princes held in November, 1926, the Resolution of His Highness the Sar Desai of Sawantwadi in regard to the question of the reorganisation of the States Forces was considered. His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner stated that he had given notice of a Resolution in 1925 asking for a survey of the new military arrangements and reorganisations. It was however ultimately disallowed as it did not affect all the States. It was decided at the suggestion of H.H. of Bikaner that Their Highnesses should think over the question and press it on the Standing Committee in time for the following year's Agenda and if possible several Resolutions should be put in covering the same ground.

2. Accordingly the question was included in the tentative Agenda for the Session of the Chamber of Princes fixed for February, 1928, and the Standing Committee which considered this tentative Agenda decided that "if a Committee on which the States were represented could be arranged by the Government of India there would be no need to proceed with this Resolution". The Political Secretary on the 16th February, 1928, wrote to inform H.H. the Chancellor that "H.E. the Viceroy has been pleased to approve of the appointment of a special Committee of representatives of Princes and British Officials to consider the questions connected with the reorganisation of the Indian States Forces", and called for the names of 3 Princes to serve on the Committee.

The names of Their Highnesses of Kashmir, Alwar, Bikaner and Patiala were suggested. This Committee consisting of Their Highnesses of Kashmir, Alwar, Bikaner and Patiala and the Government of India Officials held the first meeting on the 7th and 8th February, 1929.

Later, this question was discussed at the meeting of the Standing Committee held in March, 1932. It was agreed at the suggestion of H.H. the Maharaja of Alwar that a Conference at which all parties should be represented and which the C-in-C should also attend should be convened. This proposed Conference could not be held so far. In May, 1932, the Political Department was asked to furnish the Chancellor's Secretariat with the proposals which were to form the subject of discussion at the Conference, and in August 1932 a memorandum on the subject was received from the Government of India. The proposals contained in this memorandum were considered by a Committee of Military Experts from Indian States which met at Delhi in January-February 1933 and they drew up a detailed report on the subject for the information of the Standing Committee. In February, 1933, the Standing Committee at its informal meeting held on the 24th idem decided that the Committee of Ministers together with a representative of Kashmir should consider the report of the Military Expoerts Committee and submit a report on the political aspect of the proposals. The Ministers Standing Committee at their meeting held on the 21st January, 1934, reported that they were in general agreement with the views propounded by the Military Experts Committee on the main question of the Reorganisation of the Indian States Forces and recommended that an endeavour should be made to get the flaws in the scheme now in force removed by utilising the proposals of the Military

Experts Committee to secure that end. The Princes Standing Committee at its informal meeting held in January 1934 decided that the reorganisation of the Indian States Forces and other allied subjects should be taken up with the Political Secretary at the next meeting of the Standing Committee. No formal meeting of the Standing Committee has since taken place. It may be noted that in response to enquiries made from time to time by the Political Department as to when it would be convenient for the Conference between the Princes and the Officials of the Government of India to be held, it was replied that the Standing Committee had been busy with other more important matters relating to constitutional reforms and that Their Highnesses had not been able to consider this question.

The Political Secretary in his letter of the 13th April, 1936, stated that the Government of India regretted that they could not proceed for the present with any general revision of the existing scheme. He added that in the matter of the "ear-marked" units, however, some revision would be necessary as an urgent and ad interim measure and the various States concerned would be addressed accordingly through the usual channel.

H.H. the Chancellor in his D.O. letter No.282 dated the 6th June, 1936 addressed to the Political Secretary, pointed out that the decision of the Government not to proceed for the present with any general revision of the existing scheme would be received with disappointment and suggested that the usual procedure of consulting the Chamber should be followed with regard to the "ear-marked" units about which the Government of India consider that some revision would be necessary as an urgent and ad interim measure.

The Political Secretary in his D.O. letter of the 17th July, 1936, stated that after earnest consideration the Government of India had come to the conclusion that in the circumstances it was advisable to defer at present any general revision of the 1920 scheme.

In respect of H.H. the Chancellor's request regarding the present proposals for the revision of the "earmarked" units scheme he explained the position as follows:

"The Government of India propose as an interim measure to revive the 1920 scheme for earmarked troops only and are prepared to supply these units at Government expense with the extra arms and connected equipment now required to bring them upto the level of Regular Troops, provided

i. that such units maintain a standard of efficiency which Government consider to be adequate;

ii. that in the event of Government considering that any unit has failed, after due warning, to carry out this condition, the State concerned will, on demand, give back such arms and equipment as Government may call on them to return; and

iii. that Government are authorised by the States to assume that the Rulers concerned will, in times of emergency, place these units at the disposal of Government."

He added that the Government of India would be glad to receive any comments which the Standing Committee might care to furnish with regard to these proposals.

(B.A.)

Committee's views on the Memorandum
re the scheme for the reorganisation
of the Indian States Forces.

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The Committee carefully examined the proposals formulated by the Government of India in regard to the reorganisation of the States Forces and welcome generally the proposals meant to improve the present unsatisfactory position concerning the provision of Arms and ammunition to the Indian States Forces. The Committee however feel that the scheme as a whole requires considerable modification, before it can be safely accepted by the States.

The Committee are not aware of any unexpected increase in the numbers of the Indian States Forces. It may be mentioned that when the scheme was originally initiated, the Government of India, in under taking to arm the Forces contemplated a much larger increase than what has actually taken place. The encouragement given by the Government of India is also partly responsible for whatever increase that has taken place in recent years. So far as the increase in expenditure alluded to is concerned it may be noted that the armament supplied by the Government of India to the Indian States Forces is in not a few cases out of date or worn out and discarded by the Indian Army and consequently not a source of extra expenditure.

The Committee do appreciate the admission by Government of the fact that the States have reason to be dissatisfied with the manner in which the liability to provide free arms equipment and ammunition has been met, and are further thankful for the realisation that the condition that arms should be provided free initially and replaced subsequently at the expense of the States and yet remain the

property of the Government of India, is obviously unsatisfactory. These being the facts, the Committee feel that the proposal that all arms and connected equipment already issued to the Indian States whether free or on payment, should become the property of the States concerned is only a fair one.

As regards the size of the States Forces, the Committee agree that the " size of Armed Forces of every nation and State is controlled by the situation of the State " and should therefore "be as small as conditions allow". But the Committee do not consider that the size of the Armed Forces of any Indian State is in excess of this standard. So far as the Committee are aware the Military Forces of the States are not built up haphazard and limited only by the means to pay for them, though as a result of this latter difficulty some States may have been driven to reduce their Forces to a number which places them perilously near the border line between safety and insecurity. It is really a matter for regret that the Indian States Forces Conference which was to have been held in March, 1932, did not materialise and consequently no suitable occasion arose for the Government of India to consult the Princes before the former's views on the limitations of the Military Forces in India (including the Indian States Forces) were communicated to the Disarmament Conference at Geneva. At any rate, the Committee feel that in the absence of necessary data, it is not possible for them to express any opinion on the more or less arbitrary maximum or minimum limitation figures laid down for the Indian States Forces. The Committee are of opinion that this is a matter which should be determined primarily by the

States themselves in the light of their commitments with the Government of India and their own internal security requirements.

Now as regards the recommendations of the Government contained in para 5 of the Memorandum the Committee are definitely of the opinion that:-

(a) the existing classification of units A, B & C must be abolished and the units known as 'earmarked' should now be called 'offered and accepted' units. It should be made quite clear that the units already offered and accepted should continue to remain in that category irrespective of the difference in their present organisation and strength from the Indian Army Units if the Ruler so desires. It should be left to the discretion of each State maintaining 'offered and accepted' units whether they will also earmark Training Battalions or squadrons. Each State is responsible for supplying normal reinforcements to its 'service units ' and it may be found more convenient to do so from other units rather than from a training battalion, which may often be utilised for training recruits for units not offered as well as for those offered.

(b) all units forming part of the new scheme whether 'offered and accepted' or not should be armed (including automatics) and equipped on exactly the same scale and pattern as similar units of the Indian Army. The proposal to arm 'earmarked' units only on the Indian Army pattern and scale will, so far from abolishing the existing classification of units, tend to emphasise them and give rise to two new classes, one armed and earmarked for Imperial Service and the other not armed so well and definitely classed as second line troops.

In the case of States maintaining only 'A' class troops this would mean that the larger part of the Army would fall in the second category which would definitely affect the morale and consequently the usefulness and efficiency of those units. Taking the example of Kashmir with its vast area, difficulty of communications and extensive frontier, one of the earmarked units (supposing them to remain the same as at present) would have to be at Gilgit and the other two would have to be at Jammu in order to be at the rail-head and the inter change of stations could only be made between these three units instead of between seven as at present.

Further, the interchange of the 'offered and accepted' units with other units from time to time should rest with the Rulers, as at present, subject of course to the necessary conditions of similar organisation, strength and efficiency of the units not 'earmarked'.

While emphasising that there should be no difference of scale or pattern between the armament (including automatics) of 'offered and accepted' units and the rest, the Committee see no harm in the States agreeing to pay for Arms, equipment and ammunition in the case of the units not definitely allotted to Imperial Service, subject to the following provisos:-

(1) That all arms equipment and ammunition to the non-earmarked troops are supplied at the same vocabulary rates applicable to the Indian Army; and

(2) that the Government of India Arsenals keep a sufficient stock of the arms on charge of the non-allotted Indian States Forces Units, even in the event of the weapons becoming obsolete by the issue of upto date arms to the Indian Army to enable the States to

carry on with the arms on charge for such reasonable time as they are able to replace them by modern armament on payment under the existing procedure viz-deducting the 50 % cost of the unserviceable arms returned to arsenal, and (3) the free supply of arms and equipment to the offered and accepted units should also include the free supply of ammunition.

The memorandum recommends that States providing earmarked units should also maintain sufficient forces to ensure their own security and the protection of strategic railways within State limits when earmarked units have left the State. This obviously implies that except when mobilised the 'offered and accepted' units will, as heretofore, be also available for internal security purposes and other duties of the States, but this position should be made fully clear. It is assumed that the Government of India will not call for the 'offered and accepted' units for Imperial Service if the internal situation in the State at the time does not permit of their being offered. The States should be willing to pay for the arms equipment and ammunition of the non-earmarked units if no distinction is laid down between the armament of the two classes of units. A certain reasonable reserve of ammunition based on the scale allowed to non-arsenal units of the Indian Army, must be allowed to remain in the States over and above the quantity which would be required for annual practice.

While our thanks are due to the Government for promising not to impose any restrictions regarding the type of rifle to be issued to any Indian States Forces Unit within the scheme an assurance for the continued supply of these arms and their component parts together with the necessary ammunition from the Arsenals would also be very welcome.

The Committee agree with the recommendation (vide para 6 of the Memorandum) that His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief must be the Judge of the maximum number and the nature of the Units which he can in future accept as earmarked, and that he must be satisfied as to the availability and efficiency of the units offered for field service.

The Committee whole-heartedly endorse the suggestion contained in para 7 of the Memorandum and strongly recommend the preparation by the States of internal security schemes after a thorough review of the internal situation in each case and thus ascertain whether their commitments in respect of 'offered and accepted' units need be modified.

The Committee also do not see any objection to agreeing to the provision of the draft agreement drawn on the lines of that approved by the Chamber of Princes in the year 1930.

In conclusion the Committee being to submit to Their Highnesses that the scheme as formulated by the Government should only be agreed to if the modifications recommended in the preceding paragraphs are accepted in the main. If however this is not found possible the Committee are definitely of opinion that the present scheme may continue subject to the rectification of flaws which have been admitted now by the Government and other practical difficulties experienced by the States.

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(B.A.)